

THE
Constitution defended,
AND
PENSIONER exposed;
IN
REMARKS
ON THE
FALSE ALARM.

Here let those reign, whom pensions can incite
To vote a patriot black, a courtier white;
Explain their country's dear-bought rights away,
And plead for pirates in the face of day;
With slavish tenets taint our poison'd youth,
And lend a lie the confidence of truth,

LONDON, a Poem, by Mr. S. JOHNSON,

L O N D O N:
Printed for E. and C. DILLY in the POULTRY,
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M.DCC.LXX.

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THE
Constitution defended,

AND
PENNSYLVANIA exposed;

R. E. M. A. R. S.

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R E M A R K S

ON THE

FALSE ALARM.

TO substitute sophistry for truth is often unhappily the task of genius and learning, this must be obvious to every intelligent reader. A pamphlet intitled the *False Alarm*, may, perhaps, be deemed an instance of this kind; wherein the weakness of the cause, and the chicanery of the defender are equally conspicuous.

The advancement of political knowledge, this author observes, has by no means kept pace with that of natural; but in this he may possibly be mistaken.

The doctrines of divine hereditary right, and passive obedience to the will of kings,

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were doctrines readily adopted by those who believed the comet and the eclipse, prognosticks of publick calamity : but to the honour of this nation, the gloom both of philosophical and political prejudice, has been long since dissipated.

Yet knowledge avails little without virtue : to the superstition which could no longer awe the spirit of a people, jealous of the native rights of mankind ; the artifice of statesmen has found a less disgusting, but not less fatal substitute. Bribery is gradually subverting the principles of minds enervated by luxury ; and though surrounded with a complicated system of law, designed for its preservation, English liberty seems silently hastening to its period.

“ Causeless discontent and seditious violence (we are told) will grow less frequent and less formidable, as the science of government is better ascertained by a diligent study of the theory of man.” Causeless discontent is a non-entity, for discontent is an effect, and no effect can subsist without a cause. The appellation of seditious violence, may be affixed to the most rational, and prudently conducted opposition to the measures of government. To study the theory of man, perhaps, means to discover what the people will accept, and what they will bear : how far one part may be induced to oppress, and how far the other will

will submit to oppression. But this study of the theory of man is no novel expedient: the power of avarice over the human mind is no secret to politicians, and they make their use of it. To the troublesome opponent of administration, the tempting bait of a place or pension is presented; the base deserter of his country, with upbraiding conscience, accepts the powerful Quietus, and like the domesticks of the ancient Hebrews, is fastened to the door-post of his master, and commences slave for ever.

Our deficiency in civil wisdom, is reproached by this writer. If by civil wisdom be meant, an implicit submission to the will of power, it must be confessed our proficiency therein is inferior to that of our neighbours on the continent. The murmurs of complaint are still heard in our streets: All cannot be bribed to silence; and those who cannot, are not yet silenced by the terrors of a Bastile.

But even the language of complaint is offensive: the respectful Petitions of independent Englishmen are termed the Clamours of those who have been industrious to spread suspicion and incite fury from one end of the kingdom to the other: and the author of the False Alarm, with sufficient self-consequence, informs us, " That he cannot favour the Op-

position, for he thinks it wicked, and cannot fear it, for he thinks it weak."

However he may estimate the importance or propriety of his own thoughts, others may be of opinion, that he ought to have treated more seriously that truly serious subject, a Briton's Birth-right, Representation in Parliament.

Of this Birth-right the Freeholders of Middlesex were undoubtedly deprived, if their choice was limited; and their choice was limited, if but one man, legally qualified, was exempted from it; since of this one man, they must certainly have reasons for their preference.

But of this exempted man "Lampoon itself would disdain to speak ill, for of him no man speaks well:" yet 1143 Freeholders would scarcely vote for a man of whom none of them would speak well.

But "this man was legally convicted of sedition * and impiety." The language of impar-

* Seriously pondering the case of Master John Wilkes, it appeared doubtful unto me, whether the epithet of Sedition, affixed unto his crime, was not a Misnomer: I hereupon applied myself unto the incomparable lexicon of my most learned friend Dr. S. J——n, who I perceived explaineth it, A Tumult, an Insurrection, a popular Commotion. Now as it hath not occurred unto me that this same Master Wilkes hath been accused of engaging in such deeds of personal violence,
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impartiality would rather have said: This man was imprudent enough to offend government by an indecent publication, which by the vengeance of that government was denominated a Seditious Libel, in order to render him obnoxious to punishment: And that an unpublished copy of an impious work, supposed to have been written by him, was obtained by the mean arts of corruption, in order to prosecute him as Author; and extracts from it, (to the eternal infamy of the publishers) published to the world, for whose inspection it most probably was never designed.

To exculpate the entire character of this man, were a task as impracticable as unnecessary. Vice and virtue may surely exist together in one subject. An immoral man may love and serve his country, and assist in the construction of laws, of which he may prove no very strict observer.

“ But this man was in a jail; and shall a nation take its legislators from a jail? ” — What an indignity! — Our author cannot surely have forgotten that seven Bishops once came out of jail, Legislators: and by the Administration,

it marvellously afflicteth me, for the honour of the solemn courts of Justice, wherein Master Wilkes was convicted of Sedition, that recourse were not taken unto the aforementioned lexicon of my friend for the true interpretation of the word, whereby so manifest an error had been avoided.

MARTINUS SCRIBLERUS.

tration, which imprisoned them, were deemed as Seditious as the rejected Member for Middlesex.

But this man, for the crimes before-mentioned, was expelled the House of Commons: And, in order to justify his Expulsion, precedent is pleaded to establish the Right of the House over its own Members. Custom, however, is no proof of rectitude; an error is not the less an error for being repeatedly committed; and the precedents in question, it is allowed, were made in ages that believed the comet and eclipse portentous, and admitted by the usage of a people, who on our author's own authority, have made "little proficiency in civil Wisdom."

Supposing, however, the Jurisdiction of the House, and the Right of Expulsion in some cases are not disputed: yet, as a Member in his publick character is exempt from the cognizance of Courts of Law, but subject to the jurisdiction of Parliament; so, as in his private character he is subject to the cognizance of Courts of Law, he ought certainly to be exempt from the jurisdiction of Parliament. To punish the same crime by two methods, is an absurd severity, by which it is hoped no man will suffer for the future.

That the Commons have expelled for extra-parliamentary crimes may be true, but is no argument to evince the propriety of the practice.

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We are told, what we before knew, that a felon is not eligible in Parliament ; and also what we did not before know, " that the Commons, not being bound by forms of law, probably judged they might treat those as felons, whose crimes were in their opinion equivalent to felony."

This it must be confessed, is confiding much to the opinion of the House : This licence to convert other crimes into felony, seems to threaten no small danger to the constitution. Every member on whom a disgusted minister might please to confer this unlucky similarity to a felon, a ductile majority would of consequence expell, till the people were deprived of every guardian of their liberties.

That power can be made just by necessity, and legal by precedent, is one of the positions of this writer. But perhaps he would not greatly admire the justice of a ruffian who should plead necessity for plundering his house ; or admit the legality of the action because it had been committed by others.

He observes (page 13) " that the Commons must be controlled or be exempt from control. If they are exempt, they may do injury which cannot be redressed ; if they are controlled, they are no longer legislative."

This argument is fallacious. That the proceedings of the Commons are subject to control, cannot be denied ; since their bills may
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be rejected by the Lords, or refused the Royal Assent: but that the Commons are part of the Legislature, is equally undeniable.

The difference to be established is between their acting in a legislative capacity and otherwise. In the construction of a bill, time is required, the people are apprized of its intent, and if disapproved, may petition against it; but of a vote nothing can be known till the effect be felt.

But "if the possibility of abuse be an argument against authority, no authority ever can be established, if the actual abuse destroys its legality, there is no legal government now in the world."

The possibility of abuse is no argument against authority, but that authority, must undoubtedly be best which is least liable to be abused; and surely that authority, will not be deemed such, which has the power of doing injury which cannot be redressed. If a parliament, for instance, will not redress the injury it has done, that institution cannot be best, which has extended the power of such parliament by extending its duration; since were its duration shorter, the injury might be sooner redressed, by a reversing act of its successor.

The story of the Middlesex election, is too well known to need repetition, but as our author has told it in *his*, I shall take the liberty

liberty to tell it in *the true* way. After Mr. Wilkes had been repeatedly chosen, Mr. Lutterel thought proper to offer himself a candidate contrary to the general sense of the County. He stood a poll and had 296 voices against 1143; but what voices were even these 296; the voices of independent electors, or of the dependants of a court, who were obliged to vote for the court candidate?

In spite however of this inferiority of votes Mr. Lutterel was seated: And the uneasiness produced by the unusual decision which seated him, is termed a "madness that has spread through all ranks and through both sexes, and of which the *wise* only have escaped the infection": Yet this decision "has perplexed the minds of some, whose opinions it were indecent to despise" and who consequently cannot be supposed deficient in *wisdom*.

For the satisfaction of these, they are informed that the question, must be whether a smaller number of legal votes shall not prevail against a greater number of votes not legal. It must be considered that those votes only are legal which are legally given, and that those only are legally given, which are given for a legal candidate. That to constitute legality or illegality, there must be law, is evident; and whether a vote of the Commons be law, shall be referred to the decision of our Author page 19 of his False Alarm, to be noticed hereafter.

We are now to recur, “ not to positive institutions, but to the unwritten law of social nature, to the great and pregnant principle of political necessity * : to discover this wonderful position of which we had possibly otherwise remained ignorant : That all government supposes subjects, all authority implies obedience. That to suppose in one the right to command what another has the right to refuse is absurd and contradictory.”

Government may suppose subjects, and authority imply obedience in general----Yet government may impose commands neither proper to be imposed nor obeyed. The latter
part

* It grieveth me much in any respect to dissent from the opinion of that learned Clerk my much esteemed friend and intimate Dr. S. J——n, accounted to be Author of the False Alarm ; but notwithstanding this, and likewise that my judgment favoureth much the doctrine of implicit submission unto the will of the ruler, I must candidly acknowledge I cannot subsign my approbation to his plea of political necessity. That passion which much prevaieth in the heart of man, vulgarly cyeleped self-love, hinteth unto me, that this same plea may be advanced in justification of every act of violence, which it may seem meet unto government in the fullness of its power to exercise ; and as perchance in the course of my manifold literary labours, some inadvertency of mine may unhappily become offensive to the eye of greatness, and enforce me to add one to the numerous examples of ministerial vengeance ; the dread hereof so deeply affecteth me, that I fear I shall keep vigils for mine own safety, in like manner as those sheepleess patriots, whom my learned friend mentioneth, do for the safety of their Country.

M. SCRIBLERIUS.

part of the argument begs the question ; the right to command should not only be supposed, but proved ; and consequently to come to the point in hand, a vote of the Commons should be proved to be Law.

“ But our Ancestors fined, imprisoned, and disabled for ever.” Here is precedent again, precedent from the age of witchcraft and astrology, of terrifying meteors and prognosticating eclipses. It is owned indeed that “ these claims were made and allowed when the constitution of our government, had not yet been sufficiently studied.” This seems to imply that it is now sufficiently studied ; yet how can this be, if we have made but little proficiencie in civil wisdom.

“ But such powers are not legal because not necessary.”----Yet they must be legal in our Author's opinion, who asserts (page 12) that precedent can produce legality and it is evident they have precedent.

Nevertheless a vote of the House of Commons cannot be law for (page 19) it is positively affirmed that “ the Commons cannot make laws, they can only pass resolutions, which like all resolutions, are of force only to those that make them, and to those only while they are willing to observe them. The vote of the House of Commons has therefore only so far the force of a Law, as that force is necessary to preserve the vote from losing its

efficacy. It must begin by operating upon themselves, and extends its influence to others only by consequences arising from the first intention. He that starts game on his own manor, may pursue it into another*."

If the House of Commons cannot make laws, how can their vote have the force of a law ; what has the force of a law must be in effect a Law. If resolutions are of force only to those who make them, how can they extend their influence to others ? and whatever consequences arise from the first intention, such consequences can be of no force to others, because the first intention is of force only to those who form it.

We are next acquainted, " that the Commons can properly make laws only for themselves : A member while he keeps his seat is subject to these laws ; but when he is expelled, the jurisdiction ceases, for he is now no longer in their dominions."

Here the point is most inadvertently and unluckily given up. If after expulsion, the jurisdiction ceases ; what becomes of the doctrine

* Our Author's simile is unfortunately as foundationless as his argument. Custom cannot make Law, and the practice of pursuing Game into the Freehold of another frequently as it is practised, is illegal ; practised only on sufferance, and suffered by the reciprocal civility of gentlemen. If disliked, it may be deemed a trespass cognizable at Common Law.

trine of consequences ; extension of influence, and disqualification, which must be a permanent effect, of duration posterior to expulsion ?

This mistake, probably the author perceived, but from his mean opinion of his readers' intellects, thought not worth his while to rectify ; however he now changes the argument : Expulsion now includes disability.----

“ The disability which a vote can superinduce to expulsion, is no more than was included in expulsion itself ; it is only a declaration of the *House* that they will permit no longer him, whom they thus censure, to sit in parliament. A declaration made by that right, which they necessarily possess of regulating their own *House*, and of inflicting punishment on their own delinquents.”

But expulsion cannot include disability, or (in other words) convey the idea of non-readmission. A servant is often dismissed from his place, and a person expelled the company, for some impropriety of behaviour, but this dismissal or expulsion, by no means indicates that they must not be readmitted into the same service, or the same company. That expulsion is a declaration of the *House*, that they will no longer permit the individual they thus censure, to sit in parliament ; we have only our Authors's *ipse dixit*, instead of proof ; but supposing it to be the case, I shall proceed to examine, how far the *House* has a right of making such declaration.

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In reasoning on this subject, it must ever be considered, that the House of Commons is not a self-constituted society ; but is, or ought to be, created by the people. The people then, whose representatives the Commons are, cannot possibly have intrusted them with the power of annihilating themselves ; yet ev'ry Member disqualified must be a Member annihilated.----The people expect to be represented by the *whole* of their choice, and not by a *part* : And if the House disable a member chosen by the people, and choose one themselves, they evidently invade the province of their constituents, assume a power which they have no claim to, and confound rights which from the very nature of our constitution, should be kept for ever separate ; the right of choosing governors, and the right of government in the persons chosen.

Whether expulsion was ever designed as an act of punishment, is doubtful ; it seems rather meant to be an act in favour of the people, though sometimes practised to their disadvantage. If a representative be deemed improper by the House, he may be dismissed to his constituents, the *ultimate* judges of the propriety or impropriety of his conduct ; who certainly ought to enjoy the alternative of rechoosing him or electing another.

But supposing expulsion to be meant as a punishment, it will mostly prove so : In many cases

cases it will be a disgrace, and in some terminate in exclusion. If the offence be against the rights of the people, the offender will scarcely be rechosen, since such choice would be the effect of an infatuation, of which even the meanest ranks of the community are rarely capable; and if the offence be capital, he cannot be rechosen, for he is not legally eligible.

It is asserted (pag.) that the right of the House to reject, annihilates with regard to the man so rejected, the right of electing." But how can the House annihilate the right of electing in electors, over whom in their constituent capacity, they can have no power?

" Governments formed by chance, and gradually improved by such expedients as the successive discovery of their defects has suggested, are never to be tried by a regular theory. We must be content with them as they are; should we attempt to mend their disproportions, we might easily demolish, and with difficulty rebuild them."

It is owned that governments formed by chance (if there be any such) have been gradually improved, were they not then in as great danger of being demolished by that improvement as they could be now by a farther one. If we must be content with them as they are, what opportunity can there be for the exercise of the study of the theory
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of man for the better ascertaining the science of government; and for that proficiencie in civil wisdom, wherein we have yet made so scanty a progress.

“ Laws are now made, and customs are established, these are our rules, and by them we must be guided.”

No law, then, however oppressive, must be repealed; no custom, however absurd or inconvenient, be discontinued.

“ It is incontrovertibly certain, that the Commons never intended to leave electors the liberty of returning them an expelled Member; for they always require one to be chosen in the room of him that is expelled; and I see not with what propriety a man can be rechosen in his own room.”

What cannot be known, cannot be incontrovertibly certain; but the original intention of the House cannot be known: we have not the power of necromancy to call our ancestors from the dead to declare it; and they have left no written or printed declaration to inform us; if they had, our author would not have omitted to avail himself of an argument so much more forcible than his many very inconclusive ones. When a seat is temporarily vacated by expulsion, a Member is certainly required to fill the vacancy; and if the people, to whom their representative is returned by expulsion, think proper, they may

may rechoose him in his own room with the same propriety, that they rechoose one returned to them by the acceptance of a place.

But "Expulsion, if this were its whole effect, might very often be desirable. Sedition or obscenity might be no greater crimes in the opinion of other electors, than in that of the freeholders of Middlesex."

This oblique sarcasm on electors in general is extremely indecent. All electors are not stupid mechanics: many are sensible independent men of fortune, who as little approve of sedition or obscenity as this author; and yet love their country too well to deprive it of the services of an active useful senator, because his private character is not so irreproachable as their own.

But now Dr. J-h---n (for it is said you are author of the False Alarm) how have you deserted, nay, worse than deserted, satyriized your friends. Of the individuals, who compose that respectable body, which can give to its votes the force of a law, whose resolutions can put a negative on the voice of the people, and demonstrate 296 to be more than 1143: "Of these many can *hardly* be said to be chosen at all; some by inheriting a borough inherit a seat, and some are safe by their popularity."

If Representatives thus *hardly* chosen at all; if Burgesses of boroughs, some whereof

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are heritable, and others sell the seat to the highest bidder; if such should at any time displace one of the few members chosen by the free suffrage of the people; what appearance must such a fact wear to every eye, but that which views it through court spectacles.

Some, however, are said to "be safe by their popularity." Now popularity must be a criterion of free choice not to be mistaken: yet such are paradoxically said to be hardly chosen at all.

Our author observes, that re-election after vacation on acceptance of a place, has been pleaded in favour of re-election after expulsion, but endeavours to evade the force of the plea, by remarking that re-election after acceptance of a place is expressly authorized by act of parliament; but in this case vacation and re-election stand on the same basis; the act which enjoins the one, authorizes the other. The vacation by expulsion is very different, it is not made by law, but by a vote; and therefore the re-election needs not the sanction of a new law to give it validity.

"A placeman dismissed to his constituents is dismissed with new trust and new dignity; while a member expelled, is a varlet driven out with publick infamy."—Whatever may be Dr. J—n's idea of dignity, others may esteem independence more honourable than depen-

dependence, a master better than a servant, an honest private gentleman a nobler character than a titled placeman. And it may sometimes happen, that a placeman rechosen, or in Dr. J——n's own language, hardly chosen at all, by some of these heritable or venal boroughs, may come into the House as great a varlet, as any that can be driven out of it; for who can be a greater varlet than he that sells his country for a place or a pension.

“ There cannot exist, with regard to the same subject, at the same time, an absolute power to choose, and an absolute power to reject.”

Here the query again recurs, whether the rejecting power be absolute, or indeed at all existing. The people have confided to their representatives as legislators, such and such powers of legislation, to be exercised in such and such manners; but have not invested them with an arbitrary authority, to be exercised at pleasure, contrary to the primary intent of the constitution. Our author tacitly confesses this, when he observes, that a vote is simply a resolution which binds only him who is willing to be bound. The people, however, have in the case in question demonstrated that they were not willing to be bound, and consequently the vote to them could not be binding.

“ It has been observed, (we are told) that vice is no proper cause of expulsion; and it

the worst man in the House were expelled, there must in time be none left ; but no man is expelled for being the worst in the House, but for being enormously bad ; his conduct is compared not with that of others, but with the rule of action."

But who is to determine, whose conduct deviates most widely from that rule ? Courts of justice must not decide in this case, for their decisions have been in other cases, both partial and erroneous : the guilty, from favour or from ignorance, have escaped, and the innocent from prejudice or from mistake have suffered.

Of the ironical hint (pag. 33) of the possible consequences of the precedent in question ; it shall only be remarked, that the subject merited more serious treatment ; great events have been produced by small causes. The gap once broken in a fence soon grows wider ; the smallest aperture in the bank of a canal soon admits a torrent.

The sneering paragraph about the Scotch, merits no serious notice. I am no friend to national reflections : there are many worthy men, and well-wishers to liberty, in Scotland. Mr. Wilkes's indiscriminate censure of that nation was justly culpable, and I am not disposed to imitate an example, of which, he himself is, I doubt not, by this time, heartily and justly ashamed.

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“ It is thought strange that the whole care of the publick should be transferred to Mr. Wilkes and the freeholders of Middlesex, who might all sink into non-existence without any other effect, than that there would be room made for a new rabble, and a new retailer of sedition and obscenity.”

Admirable indeed is the force of Dr. J—n’s annihilating pen, which can thus in a moment reduce to non-existence, the freeholders of a whole county and their representative! It were pity, but this same force should be applied to the succeeding rabble and their retailer of sedition; and so on till the whole race of freeholders are extirpated. In that case, Administration, which at present can under form of law too readily procure a majority; may for the future procure a whole House, and need only transmit to the sheriff the name of the gentleman that must represent the county.

“ The rabble, whencesoever they come, will always be patriots and always Supporters of the Bill of Rights.”—Who that has the least regard for his native country, can without concern and indignation, hear a court-pensioned-writer speak with such contempt of the Bill of Rights, one of the sacred tenures by which we hold what yet remains of Liberty? A person disposed to be suspicious would suspect from this stroke, that the apprehensions of
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the publick are not quite so groundless, nor the Alarm quite so false, as is represented by our author: neither would the suspicions of such a person be at all diminished on perusing the next paragraph.

“ The decisions of the House have often been apparently partial, and sometimes tyrannically oppressive. A majority has been given to a favourite candidate by expunging votes, which had always been allowed, and which therefore had the authority by which all votes are given, that of custom uninterrupted. When the Commons determine who shall be constituents, they may with some propriety be said to make law *, because these determinations have hitherto for the sake of quiet been adopted by succeeding parliaments.”

The writer of these remarks ever till now imagined, that the point, who should be constituents, had long since been fixed by virtue of

* It heavily afflicteth the heart of Martinus Scriblerus, in that he observeth in this work of his most learned friend, certain indication of the senescence of genius; among others the failure of that needful faculty of reminiscence is mournfully apparent. ‘ The Commons are here said to make law; and soon after it is declared, that their vote operateth as a law;’ but in the former part of this erudite treatise, my friend saith, that “ they cannot make law at all.” Truly here appeareth a lack of precision and consistency unknown to this prodigy of literature in his meridian period.

of that legislative power wherewith the people have agreed to invest their representatives; that is to say, by act of parliament. If those whose decisions have "often been partial and sometimes tyrannically oppressive," are to determine who shall be constituents, they may possibly determine that there be no constituents at all, but sit by their own power a self-constituted aristocracy, at once servants of the crown and masters of the people.

These consequences, it may be objected, are only perceptible to that political second sight which sees nothing but evil. I would neither approximate and magnify danger on one hand, or on the other, distance and diminish it; but when we are informed by a court-writer, that "a vote of the House, when it operate as a law, is to individuals a law only temporary, but to communities perpetual:" that is in plain words, a vote of a majority under the influence of Administration is law for ever; who can deny that danger, however distinguished, is approaching.

The people have so long demonstrated implicit acquiescence, and even satisfaction in every measure of government, however oppressive or irrational, that it is no wonder Petitions are accounted unnecessary novelties: but I appeal to Dr. J——n's own conscience, whether his descriptions of the late Petitions be

be not designed misrepresentation.—In spite of lord Shaftsbury, ridicule is not the test of truth : Things the most serious and important may be ridiculed.

Those who signed the Petitions are not all pedlars and the meanest and grossest of the people : They are signed by the middle gentry, yeomanry and substantial traders, who are sensible, if not learned, who can feel when they are oppressed ; and can think more consistent, though perhaps they cannot write like Dr. J——n. It is these who are impoverished by those taxes you so sneeringly hint at ; taxes which are particularly levelled at them ; and these it is, who after all other oppressions, complain of the Coup de main which has violated the Right of Election.

While this is the case on one hand, and the richer gentry on the other, are yet more enriched by contracts, lotteries, pensions and places, and their luxuries in great measure exempted from taxation, every impartial eye, without the aid of second-sight may perceive, that this nation, like some on the continent, will soon know but two orders of people, the Noble and the Slaves. There was a time when probably the sagacious Dr. J——n, would have allowed this to be the greatest of national evils ; and probably would allow it to be so now, were he to view the state of things

things in the mirror of truth, and not through the deceptive distorting medium of Court Spectacles*.

Our author now queries "how but by unnecessary intelligence and artificial provocation, should the farmers and shop-keepers of Yorkshire and Cumberland know or care how Middlesex is represented?"

Surely Dr. J——n you must have forgot that news-papers are circulated even to those remote counties. But perhaps this intelligence may be deemed unnecessary, the liberty of the Press may be a grievance; and you think the proceedings of government should be transacted with Inquisitorial secrecy.

That nation must be arrived at a pitch of effeminacy and stupidity indeed, one part whereof could behold the rights of the other invaded without emotion: yet to such a pitch are some counties in this boasted land of liberty now arrived.

Your

* These same Court Spectacles are supposed to possess a power somewhat analogous to that of the cylindrical mirror employed in a certain optical experiment termed the Anamorphosis. This converts a monster into a man; those convert a man into a monster; a patriot into a rebel; a respectful pensioner into a seditious incendiary; an honest intelligent tradesman into a vile mechanic.—It were endless to expatiate on their virtues; yet, from the great regard I bear to Dr. J——n, I most heartily wish, for his own reputation, he had *never worn a pair*.

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Your polite epithets of profligate and dissolute, your plebeian grossness and savage indecency, but very indifferently supply the place of argument, and might perhaps be retorted with much more propriety, than they are bestowed. Your charge of malignity in the mean, against the great, discovers only your own malignity against the mean. You once discovered as much malignity against the great,* but you were then one of the mean. You must now be allowed to think differently.

Your

* Vide. London a Poem in imitation of the third Satyr of Juvenal, a most bitter Satyr against the Great.

Not only Petitions now so offensive to Dr. J——n, but even Remonstrances, were once not disapproved; on the contrary, the people were upbraided with their acquiescence.

Thro' Freedom's sons no more *Remonstrance* rings,
 Degrading Nobles and controuling Kings;
 Our supple tribes repress their Patriot throats,
 And ask no questions but the price of votes.

Vide. The Vanity of Human Wishes.

By S. Johnson, Doddsley's Collection, Vol. 14.

Verily it attracteth tears into the aged eyes of Martinus once again to remark the debility of intellect in a friend, whose elaborate Dictionary, and well-devised conjectural Annotations on the labours of that learned Clerk, Master William Shakespeare, have heretofore afforded unto him, right delectable and profitable amusement: But truth constraineth me to declare, that my friend, in this his indiscriminate censure, of those whom the propitious ray
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Your slavish positions, wherewith you furnish your court orator, who is supposed to harrangue the promoters of a Petition, are all but one, unworthy notice. Submission, you say, is the duty of the ignorant, and content the virtue of the poor.

You should have said, that content is equally a virtue in rich and poor, though most becoming, as well as most rational in the former. Ignorance is a misfortune, not a crime, and cannot intitle to slavery. The man who cannot write or read, has the same right to Liberty as he that can. The doctrine, of submission the duty of the ignorant, and content the virtue of the poor, might have become the mouth of an emissary of the church of Rome, whose power is well known to be founded on the

of golden fortune, hath not rendered conspicuous among their fellows, unwittingly departeth from his former opinions holden forth in a most excellent little tract of his, entitled *The Rambler*, wherein in No. 68, I read as followeth: "However vanity or insolence may look down with contempt on the suffrage of men, undignified by wealth, and unenlightened by education, it very seldom happens, that they commend or blame without justice. Vice and Virtue are easily distinguished, oppression, according to Harrington's aphorism, will be felt by those that cannot see it; and perhaps, it falls out very often, that in moral questions, the philosophers in the *Gown* and in the *Livery*, differ not so much in their sentiments, as in their language, and have equal power of discerning right, though they cannot point it out to others with equal address.

the ignorance and implicit submission of the vulgar.

Your story of the French villains had better have been *spared*; it only withdraws the ~~evil~~ veil which before too slightly covered your despotic principles.

Your charge of cruelty on the opposition, should likewise have been omitted; for you cannot prove it, unless it was cruelty to demand justice on offenders, protected by the partiality of power. Were I inclined to re-criminate, I would refer you to the scenes of St. George's Fields, and the Brentford Election.

As to those low-born railers, who you say, have attacked the character of their Sovereign, the opposition is certainly not accountable for the imprudent conduct of every man who joins it; there must be some alloy among the gold. The King's character is truly respectable; I wish he were neither insulted on one hand, nor flattered on the other. Flatterers cannot be friends; nor do I think the compliments paid him by such at the expence of his immediate predecessors, can be either paid or accepted with propriety. Yet such is the compliment of Dr. J-----n who assures us, he is the only King who for almost a century, has much appeared to desire, or much endeavoured to deserye, the affections of the people.

Had

“Had Rome (you say) fallen by the Catilinarian conspiracy, she might have consoled her fate by the greatness of her destroyer; but what would have alleviated the disgrace of England, had her government been changed by Tyler or by Ket?”

If the government had been changed for the better, the disgrace would not have needed alleviation. If the people were oppressed and could even by such men, have been freed from oppression, the meanness of the instrument would not have detracted from the glory and advantage of the achievement. If a nation be saved or ruined, it is quite immaterial whether it be saved or ruined, by a profligate Lord * or an illiterate Mechanick.

“One part of the nation (you tell us) has never before contended with the other, but for some weighty and apparent interest: if the means were violent, the end was great. The civil war was fought for what each army called and believed, the best religion, and the best government. The struggle in the reign of Anne, was to exclude or restore, an exiled King.

* The real character of Catiline, will convey a pretty just idea of our Author's definition of *Greatness*.—“In a city so abounding with disorders, the vices and crimes of Cataline, deservedly placed him at the head of *all*, that it contained of *vile*. Crevier's Roman History, Vol. 2, page 258, octavo edition.

King. We are now disputing with almost equal animosity, whether Middlesex shall be represented or not, by a criminal from a Gaol."

But, by your leave, good Dr. J——n, the subject of our dispute is not a criminal in a gaol, but a much more glorious object, an object more glorious than all the crowns of all the Kings in Europe or Asia. An object for which the best blood of Greece, of Rome, and of Albion has been effused. An object as important to the Clown and the Pedlar, as to the Gentleman and the Philosopher: and that object is LIBERTY.

"None can indeed wonder (you say) that the opposition has been supported by the *Sectaries*, the constant fomenters of sedition, and never failing confederates of the rabble, of whose religion little now remains but hatred of establishments."

But all the *Sectaries*, as you call them, are not in the opposition: some of them are so false to their own interest, as to be on your side the question. The majority of them are not without reason, jealous of their civil and religious liberties. They have not forgotten what they formerly suffered from High Church Courts, and it is not impossible, but they may suspect that Court to be rather tenacious of High Church principles, whose offensive High Church advocate, defends the obnoxious measures of administration.

The

The political second fight of dissenters, may possibly discern a schism bill, or repeal of the toleration in embryo.

However, we have this consolation, that dissolute and enervate as the populace of this age confessedly are, and as little as you think they have left of religion, should that little be ever again subjected to the iron hand of persecution, an opposition will probably be formed, tenfold more formidable, than that of Wilkes and his Middlesex Freeholders.

And now Dr. J———, whatever may be your opinion of the matter, perhaps the world will be of opinion, that, instead of writing the False Alarm, and abusing the most numerous and respectable part of the nation, with unprovoked virulence, you had much better have rested in that frigid neutrality, wherewith you upbraid your friends the Tories.

F I N I S.

The political second right of dissent, may
possibly dissent a certain bill, or repeal of the
toleration in embryo.

However, we have this consolation, that
difficult and obscure as the problems of this
age continually are, and as little as you think
they have left of religion, should that little be
ever again referred to the iron hand of power,
cannot an opinion will probably be formed,
tend to more formidable, than that of W. Lloyd



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